

Lower Extremity Injury Prevention Initiative (FY02 – 2012)

Impact

This initiative succeeded in dispelling some fears about the new Army Physical Training Test (APFT) and also educated soldiers about new PT training goals and methods.

Description

The purpose of this initiative was to establish a physical fitness regimen using experimental training methods such as interval training, circuit drills, agility drills, and other battle-focused training based on the goals of the unit selected. The initiative targeted Active Duty Infantry Soldiers with the dual goals of reducing lower extremity injuries and increasing fitness. The specific goals of the initiative were to: reduce the injury rates and amount of lost-duty days among Active Duty Combat Arms Soldiers by 20%, to improve or sustain pass rates on the APFT, and to improve APFT mean scores.

This initiative was to be a joint effort between the units and the Physical Therapy Clinic. Instruction was to be provided on the new physical fitness regimen. Four days of "train-the-trainer" training for unit personnel with possible certification was planned. However, deployment affected the intended project implementation plan.

Outcomes

- Some of this initiative's experimental training methods were adopted by units not participating in the study.
- The initiative also decreased anxiety about the new APFT test among those Soldiers that were trained.

Innovative features

This initiative used the most current physical therapy research information to craft a physical training program that would meet the goals of improved battle readiness while at the same time reducing injury rates. The initiative featured an innovative partnering of physical therapists and unit personnel.

Lessons learned

- Units may have competing Line and Medical interests and requirements regarding physical training and fitness. Therefore, getting buy-in from the Line before starting a project is essential for success.